

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 189.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 1855.

PRICE 1d.  
STAMPED 2d.



THE HAMBURG SENATOR BURNING HIS NEPHEW'S MANUSCRIPT.

## THE BURNED MANUSCRIPT.

ULRICH ALVEN was the fifth son of a small landed proprietor in Holstein. His father, well skilled in farming, knew how to separate the chaff from the wheat; but he had reaped only a scanty

harvest from the fields of literature. His whole library consisted of his bible, hymn-book, an almanack, and a treatise on horned cattle by a popular agricultural writer. His young son, Ulrich, however, was of a different stamp. He read what

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ever books he could get hold of—works of useful knowledge excepted. The neighbourhood furnished but few books to please him, for he declared every work prosy and dull which required the exercise of thought and attention. He had got hold, unfortunately, of many popular extravagant German romances, abounding with unreal pictures of human life, and with exploits of freebooters and military adventurers. With his imagination inflamed, and his mind vitiated by the perusal of such garbage, the reader will readily understand how the prospect of following his father's trade, as a farmer, became quite loathsome to his taste.

The circumstances of his family, however, left him no option but to set himself to what he considered an employment unfavourable to his aspiring genius. Ulrich's first day's work, on leaving school, was to tend a herd of cattle in a meadow, and to prevent them breaking through a hedge; but, having taken a romance with him to keep him from weariness, he was soon transported beyond all earthly cares; and his father the day after had to redeem several oxen, which had broken through the hedge, and established themselves as uninvited guests in the rich hay-field of a neighbour. To awaken Ulrich from his extravagant dreams of the romance writers, he was sent to hold the plough, which his father thought would take him away from his books. But there Ulrich proved himself a very inventive genius; for, turning his back to the horses, he made a seat of the plough-tree, used the two handles of the plough as a reading-desk, on which he laid the legend of the "Twelve sleeping Virgins," and found great delight in having bodily exercise and mental food at the same moment. The boy who ought to have driven the horses, observing the example of his young master, amused himself in chase of butterflies. The honest horses, however, knew their duty, and continued their toil with incessant diligence, till their accustomed hour at noon arrived; it was then found that they had turned an acre or so of a neighbour's finely sprouting wheat into a roughly-ploughed field.

With great patience Ulrich's father bore the negligence of his son; but that patience was to be still more sorely tried. The memoirs of a famous German freebooter became Ulrich's favourite study: he could scarcely, indeed, be torn from it. The daring nature of his robberies on the highway, the heroism of his character, and the occasional glimpses of generosity he showed to those in his power, almost turned the brain of the youth. He could not then see that such heroes were the pests of society, living beyond all law and civilisation, with the gallows as the usual termination of their career. So foolishly addled had his head become, that he even seriously meditated forming a troop of his own, with himself at their head as their noble captain. Gathering round him his young village companions, Ulrich had harangued them gravely and mysteriously on the subject, promising them that instead of herding cattle or driving sheep, they should live at perfect freedom in black forests abounding with deer, or in ruined castles beneath whose vaults were hidden treasures. In short, like our own Robin Hood, they were to lead a merry life under the greenwood tree, taking

whatever they needed from any traveller that came within their reach. German youths are notoriously imaginative; and we need not wonder at such effects being produced in Ulrich by his romance reading, when we see the results which the habitual perusal of narratives of crime has produced on the youthful population of our own country.

Ulrich's father happened, however, to hear of his son's fine scheme, and saw the necessity of curbing his fancy, though the power to do so was now greatly beyond his reach. Punishment he dared not think of, and persuasion, he feared, would be fruitless. "But an end must be put to this," he said, "cost what it will." He determined, therefore, to send Ulrich to his uncle by the mother's side, in Hamburg, to see if change of scene, and the wise example of his kinsman, could not direct him to some useful object.

This uncle, by honest perseverance and the blessing of a kind Providence on his business, had amassed considerable wealth. He was a bachelor; and though he had had little communication with his relatives, yet Ulrich's mother was tenderly attached to him as being her only brother—an attachment which, as will be seen in the sequel, was not unreturned by him.

Ulrich joyfully prepared for his departure. He was anxious to go into the world, which, according to his glowing imagination, stood ready to receive with open arms so gifted a youth as he was. He was also fully persuaded that, as he had been always delighted to see any relations that lived in the neighbourhood, so the joy of those who dwelt at a distance to see him must be much greater. But another rare project had seized his brain. From reading so many romances he had betaken himself to writing one, and had filled up nearly a ream of paper with an extravaganzas of his own composition. This, he thought, would be purchased by some publishers with the greatest avidity, and yield him a large sum of money. Of this he entertained not the smallest doubt, which lightened his journey through the dreary heaths of Holstein.

With a small packet of linen, his manuscript in his trunk, and a letter from his father, which his old schoolmaster had written for him, Ulrich entered the Hanseatic city by the Altona gate about two o'clock in a fine October day; and having deposited his luggage in a small inn near St. Michael's church, he set forth in quest of his uncle's abode.

That worthy citizen, whose name was Salmon, inhabited a large hotel-like-looking building, which served him for a commodious warehouse as well as a comfortable private dwelling. Such, indeed, was his reputation, that before he had reached his fiftieth year he had been chosen a senator of the city; and although at that age he was regarded as little better than a minor by his colleagues, yet he showed as much practical wisdom as the greater portion of his seniors put together. Before the door of his peaceful citadel Ulrich now stood, and, boldly turning the handle to go in, found, to his surprise, that it rung a bell of its own accord. He entered the large hall, and was met by a smart servant-maid.

"Is Mr. Salmon at home?" he asked rather abruptly.

"Do you mean his worship the herr senator?" she replied, in a tone of offended dignity. "If so, the senator is at home, but cannot see any one to-day."

"Is he, then, so ill?" said Ulrich.

"Ill? no; he is at table, and never allows any one to disturb him at dinner."

"Tell him," continued Ulrich, "that his nephew — Ulrich Alven — is waiting to see him."

The maid went up the steps into a room leading from the hall, and Ulrich, nothing abashed, followed closely behind her.

Senator Salmon had been afflicted for the last six weeks by his old enemy, the gout; but now, freed from pain, he was about to enjoy at dinner a favourite dish, to which he had all that time been a stranger, when Ulrich entered, having scarcely allowed the girl time to deliver his message. The senator, thus untimely disturbed, surveyed his visitor with a look of surprise and displeasure, and called out: "Well, young man, what unavoidable necessity has prevented you from waiting till to-morrow with your business?"

Ulrich was a little discouraged by his reception; yet, quickly recovering his self-reliance, he began to run on about his plans and expectations in a very obscure and confused manner, till his uncle abruptly interrupted him by saying: "What are you talking about, boy? I expected nothing less than that your father's house, and barns, and stables, were all burned down, or that his meadows and fields were destroyed by a whirlwind or water-spout; and instead of that, you have been troubling me with nothing but nonsense. Allow me, I beg of you, young man, to enjoy in peace the first good dinner I have seen after six weeks of pain and suffering; and as the dish before me is getting cold, go into the adjoining room and write down your address: I will let you know when it will be convenient for me to speak to you."

Although a good deal confounded, Ulrich remembered the letter of introduction he had brought from home; so he drew it from his pocket, laid it silently on the table, and hastened from the apartment. He wrote not only his address in the room to which he was directed, but added something more, by way of affording his uncle in black and white a specimen of his high abilities. This necessarily took up a little time. The prudent senator had in the meantime taken up the letter; and, notwithstanding the danger of the roasted capon before him getting cold, his habits, as a true man of business, would not allow him to put it in his pocket without reading it. The result of his perusal was, that he gave orders to the waiting-maid to entertain Ulrich before he left the house with nothing more than bread and cheese and small-beer. The youth did not despise the humble meal set before him; it was too much like home for him to remark any particular difference from his father's table; besides, he was, in spite of all his silly romance reading, a lad of good temper and of an amiable disposition. He therefore did full justice to the rations provided for him, but went away, inwardly resolved that he would prove to his uncle how independent he was of his aid. Was he not a genius; and had he not in his portmanteau a manuscript of priceless value? To a publisher he would forthwith go.

To conceive the design, and to execute it, were simultaneous processes with Ulrich. The first bookseller he went to looked at the manuscript, turned over a few leaves, tossed it down on his counter, and begged sarcastically to decline so hopeful a purchase. Nothing daunted, Ulrich went to another, who, having examined a page or two, replied: "Are you serious, young man, in asking me to risk my money on such stuff as this? Let me advise you to take it home, and put it in the fire as soon as possible." Still undeterred by his ill success, Ulrich resolved to make one trial more; but the result was not more encouraging: for, in this instance, the bookseller, after a slight survey, looked sternly at him, and said:—

"I fear, young man, you must have escaped from a mad-house, and it would be a kindness to send for a police officer to take you where you might be lodged in safety, till your friends are informed that you are caught!" So speaking, the uncourteous bibliopole tossed the manuscript back to Ulrich, leaving him to pick it up and walk out of the shop with feelings very different to those with which he had entered it.

On reaching the little inn where he lodged, Ulrich retired at once to his bedroom, and began seriously to consider the disappointment he had experienced. Silence, solitude, and separation from all who were accustomed to feed his vanity, greatly helped him to inquire into the state of his mind. Being naturally ingenuous, and remembering some early precepts of a religious character instilled into his mind, he came to the conclusion that, instead of being a genius, he had scarcely common sense. One day in Hamburg had done more to destroy his self-confidence than the advice of his parents had effected in years. He spent a very restless night; and when next day he received a note from senator Salmon, stating "that his nephew might visit him at three o'clock in the afternoon," he repaired to his uncle's mansion, much changed in his demeanour from the day before.

On being shown into the dining-room, he found the senator sitting by the fire, with his suffering feet wrapped in flannel, and thrust into slippers twice as large as his ordinary shoes. His reception of his nephew was much more friendly than on the previous visit. He shook him by the hand, praised his punctuality in the time of his coming, and said with a smile: "What I have to tell you can be said partly at table, for dinner is just being served up, and I have no inclination to eat it half cold, as I was obliged to do yesterday."

It was an excellent dinner, and Ulrich showed that he had brought an appetite with him from Holstein, fully capable of doing justice to it; indeed, being somewhat ashamed of his insatiability, he twice remarked to his uncle that he thought the air of Hamburg made one very hungry. The senator asked him many questions about his parents, and his own pursuits, until Ulrich at last let loose his tongue in praise of his manuscript, which, notwithstanding its rejection by the booksellers, he still thought a precious treasure, keeping it safely wrapped up in the bottom of his huge pocket. The senator desired to see it, and read part of it during the change of courses at dinner. He began, however, to turn over the leaves quicker

and quicker—reading a passage here, and another there; but only remarked, when he had finished the examination: "Ay, nephew, you write a tolerably good hand."

After dinner was concluded, they returned to the fireside, when Mr. Salmon, addressing Ulrich with great seriousness, said: "Now nephew, which did you like best—the bread and cheese on which you dined yesterday, or the roast-beef and delicacies on which you have dined to-day?"

"Oh," answered Ulrich, "I would much prefer my table of to-day, uncle!"

"Well, then," continued his uncle, "I will show you the way to obtain a continuance of it. Bring your manuscript here from the table." Hastily Ulrich obeyed the desire, and put it into his uncle's hand. Slowly did the latter take hold of it; but in a moment, to the painful astonishment of Ulrich, he threw it into the fire, saying: "We must, in the first place, get rid of this foolish nonsense." Ulrich called out to save it, but the senator turned a deaf ear to him, and kept him back from any attempt to snatch it from the flames. The manuscript burned brightly, and in a few minutes its ashes were not to be distinguished from those around it. Ulrich sat speechless, witnessing the sad end of all his literary hopes, and the utter destruction of a work which, in spite of his repulses by the booksellers, would in time, he thought, have secured him an undying reputation, besides endless profit. The uncle, however, calmed him down with the following speech.

"It was above all things needful, nephew, that we should be freed from the nonsense you had brought together in that manuscript. I saw enough, in the few passages I read, to satisfy me that had any eyes but mine perused it, it would have ruined your reputation for ever. In the letter you left yesterday, there were a few lines inclosed from your mother, my good sister. She puts confidence in my power and inclination to serve her son. She has a right to do so, and I wish to show that such confidence is not misplaced; provided, indeed, that you, nephew, do not prove foolish or obstinate. When I left my humble parental and God-fearing home, in order to make my way through the world, my dearly-loved sister felt deeply for me, and as I took leave of her, shedding many hot tears, she pressed three specie dollars into my hand, and thus doubled my little capital. She had earned that sum with great labour during the previous winter, working two hours later every evening at her wheel; besides this, she assisted a young widow, whose husband had lately died and left her but scantily provided for, in her household affairs, while harvest was in hand. This I happened to hear in a whispered conversation between the two; and I had afterwards a picture taken of the scene, fixing on the very moment when your mother, working as a servant girl, intrusted the young widow with the secret that she was doing all the work she could get, in order to help her young brother to start in life. There hangs the picture," continued the senator, pointing to a well-executed drawing on the opposite side of the room, in which Ulrich recognised a tolerable likeness of his mother.

"That picture, nephew," proceeded his uncle, "is a memorial of my grateful recollection of my

dear sister, and it is well for you that it hangs there still; for the long-continued silence of your family, the cares of business, and my magisterial duties, might well have put it out of my mind. I intend to repay her affectionate concern for me, by endeavouring to raise you into a comfortable situation in life; but this can only be by your promising that you will have nothing more to do with the foolish nonsense you have been reading and writing. You write a good hand, and your mother assures me you can cast accounts. It would have been very agreeable to me, if you had been able to follow the worthy custom of our forefathers, and learn some useful handicraft; for from that they often came to be princes. But for this you are now too old; if you have no objection, therefore, I intend to take you into my own warehouse. What you do not understand I will explain to you, or cause others to do; but I trust greatly to your good sense and earnest endeavours to make yourself master of the business, or you will only fall into contempt. To encourage you, and by way of consoling you for the burning of your manuscript, you shall have a well-furnished room in my house. You shall also have a good salary; and by and by you will step into an excellent business, by way of exchange for your ream of spoiled paper. Now, happiness be with you; I will not hear a word from you at present. Go, and consider what I have been saying; and to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, announce yourself in my counting-house."

What a change was here to Ulrich! Though his uncle's address had not failed of its effect upon him, especially after his serious reflections of the preceding evening, yet he still hesitated. But he had an hour or two of daylight remaining, and these he spent in perambulating the city. He went along the Neustrasse, the Yungferstieg, and various other fashionable parts of the town. He passed through the Admiralty Street, the Vorsetzen, and other places of business; and when he saw the signs of wealth, and the extent of commerce carried on, he began to think that such an offer as was made him was not to be despised. The unaffected sincerity of his uncle also was captivating to a mind like his. In short, his walk changed his youthful dream of literary renown into an admiration of business, and he came to the determination to devote his energies to commerce, and with God's blessing to rise to be a successful merchant of the city of Hamburg. He then went to his little inn and spent a quiet and peaceful night; and in the morning, having paid his bill, and made up his little bundle, he appeared at the moment appointed in his uncle's office.

He soon learned the duties he had to do, for a new and laudable ambition stimulated him. He gave the fullest satisfaction to his uncle; who, retiring more and more from business as the gout made more frequent attacks upon his limbs, at length left the whole concern in Ulrich's hands. As a thriving merchant, and apparent heir to the wealthy senator Salmon, he lives respected on 'Change and often thanks the day when his manuscript was thrust between the bars of the fire.

In this true narrative, though names and places, for obvious reasons, may be changed, let those who fondly fancy themselves geniuses learn a



useful lesson. Many a young person, with good talents for business, but with none for literature, wastes in hopeless attempts to become a third-rate author, abilities that if strenuously directed would secure him competence and success in another pursuit. May such learn a lesson from the burned manuscript! Young persons, too, may see the folly and danger of cultivating a taste for the perusal of foolish and pernicious literature. They may not have the same favourable opportunity of being disentangled from its evil influences which Ulrich had, and may have to suffer the consequences of it during their whole life. It will generally be found that those who, like Ulrich before his acquaintance with his uncle, are led away by reading of this kind, will be unprosperous in the whole of their subsequent progress. They trifle through life without aim or object, and acquire enfeebled habits of thought, which unfit them for the active business of the world.

### THE SERPENT HOUSE AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

#### SECOND PAPER.

FASCINATED as we may be by the glancing eye and erect port of the cobra, we must break the charm and pass on. Our eye immediately rests upon a compartment tenanted by a small group of serpents, as deadly, or nearly so, as are their neighbours, but whose habits and manners are very different. The case of rattlesnakes is before us. These reptiles are all natives of America, and several species are known, extending southwards from the United States, through Mexico, Guiana, Brazil, &c.

Observe them: they are, for the most part, coiled circularly round, with the head in the centre, and the tail, terminated by its rattle of cells, slightly elevated. One or two are sluggishly crawling about, or are thrown into simple, or "sigmoid" flexures. They do not meet our approach with an air of defiance, for they are by no means combative in disposition, as far as man is concerned, and must even be greatly provoked before they will sound the tocsin of war.

Very different is the aspect of the rattlesnake from that of the cobra. No large, bold, bright eye, no expanded hood, no proud attitude, gives what we term an aspect of "high-blood" to the former. True, the eye is bright, but it is small and malicious in expression—an expression to which the remarkably broad and flattened contour of the head no little contributes. Nor is the general form so graceful; for the body is thick in comparison with its length, and the scaly investment is by no means so smooth and glossy. Let us not, however, do injustice to the rattlesnake. It is not a vindictive foe, unprepossessing as it may appear; it is slow to wrath, and gives fair warning before it strikes. How quick was the cobra to take offence! But we must pretend to assault the rattlesnake before it will display any symptoms of anger. If we may be allowed to speak in *propria persona*, we owe a debt of gratitude to the rattlesnake; for upon a certain occasion it fell to our duty to examine a box sent to a certain place, without any indication as to its con-

tents, excepting that a small wirework grating, not exceeding a crown piece in diameter, was on the lid. This lid we directed to be unfastened; a quantity of moss appeared; and without a moment's reflection we thrust our hand right down into the centre. We had often done so on similar occasions, when such packages as this, containing lizards and harmless snakes, were received, and therefore did not for an instant think about the matter. We expected to feel something scaly, and so we did, but were not quite prepared for that singular indescribable vibratory rustle, rather than rattle, which greeted our unceremonious disturbance of the concealed tenants. We need not say that our hand was withdrawn, though not suddenly; well we knew what we had to deal with, for quicker than our action would have been that of the irritated snakes; but we withdrew our hand with far more gentle caution than we had introduced it, though not without a breathless pause, till, through the interposition of a merciful Providence, we felt assured of our escape. Had these reptiles been cobras, we should not have come off so easily, and might, perhaps, have met with the fate of the rash keeper who, a few years ago, ventured in foolhardiness "to dally with the crested worm," or, in other words, to play the snake-charmer with a cobra, which bit him in the face, inflicting a wound which soon terminated his life.

If the cobra be surprised or alarmed, he at once prepares for the assault. The rattlesnake, on the contrary, is usually desirous of escaping, and retires with the tail erect, and rapidly vibrating; but when driven to extremity, he coils himself up, raises his head, and prepares to strike. It is then that the head appears to be more than usually flattened, the throat and cheeks are distended, the jaws are opened, the venom-fangs displayed, the tongue quivers, and the body alternately swells and sinks with rage, like a pair of bellows, while the elevated rattle is vibrated with increased velocity. Should the enemy now approach, the blow is instantaneously struck; should he, however, retire, the snake unfolds his coils, and promptly seeks concealment. Frequently have we witnessed this exhibition, having purposely irritated the reptile—not, however, from idle curiosity, but for a scientific object. In this state of irritation the rattlesnake exhales a disgusting odour; but this is the case with most serpents, and particularly so with our common English snake, which we need not say is harmless.

The rattlesnake is fond of basking in sunny spots, and several are often seen collected together, thus enjoying themselves; when disturbed they separate, and each sluggishly creeps to its retreat. There are times, however, in which the rattlesnake rouses up from its habitual indolence, and displays considerable energy; and this is manifested especially during the warm season of the year, when it is animated with more than usual vigour, and is eager for food. At this period its venom is not only intensely virulent, but is secreted in large quantities, and all animals instinctively dread it. "I have often," says M. Bosc, "amused myself by trying to force my horse and dog to approach one of these animals, but they would sooner have allowed themselves to be

knocked down on the spot than come near them." This instinctive dread, which even dogs and horses experience, is so excessive in weak or small animals, and especially in birds, squirrels, and similar animals, as to produce that paralyzation of mental and bodily energy which renders them helpless. They are then said to be fascinated; and this fascination, this horror, will even induce them to approach to, instead of fly from, the object of their terror. They experience an impulse to rush into the danger which presents itself, rather than to retreat. It is a feeling which many experience when placed on the giddy height of some precipice, and which seems to urge them to attempt the fatal leap. The mind is prostrate, or sinks in the vortex of some irresistible impulse.

Lawson, in his "History" (1714), says, when referring to rattlesnakes: "They have the power or art, I know not which to call it, to charm squirrels, hares, partridges, or any such thing, in such a manner that they run directly into their mouths. This I have seen by a squirrel and one of these rattlesnakes; and other snakes have in some measure the same power." Catesby enters into further details. "The charming, as it is commonly called, or attractive power, which this snake is said to have of drawing to it animals and devouring them, is generally believed in America: as for my own part, I never saw the action; but a great many from whom I have had it related, all agree on the manner of the process, which is, that the animals (birds and squirrels, which principally are their prey) no sooner spy the snake, than they skip from spray to spray, hovering and approaching gradually nearer their enemy, regardless of any other danger, but with distracted gestures and outcries descend from the top of the loftiest trees to the mouth of the snake, who openeth his jaws, takes them in, and in an instant swallows them."

We may here observe that the rattlesnake is not gifted with the power of climbing trees, but always seizes and swallows his prey on the ground. The birds and squirrels, therefore, have to descend to meet their fate, urged either by the impulse to which we have alluded, or prompted to advance too closely, in hopes of driving the foe from their nests. In all this there is nothing mysterious; for in the one case the victim, startled by the reptile's sudden appearance, becomes paralyzed with terror; in the other, the desire to drive away a foe, against which they have an instinctive hatred, urges them to put themselves in jeopardy.

After all, however, it is not very certain that living birds are the habitual or ordinary prey of the sluggish ground-creeping rattlesnake. A few years ago, Mr. Pence of Philadelphia made some experiments with a view to ascertain the fact. On one occasion he introduced a living oriole into the cage of a rattlesnake, and the bird remained there unmolested for the space of two days, nor did it betray the least fear, but hopped about without exciting the attention of the reptile, which, however, devoured a dead bird, while the living one was disregarded. After the oriole, a cardinal grosbeak was introduced; but this bird was also unnoticed, save when, with unhesitating familiarity, it hopped on the reptile's back, which then sounded its rattle, the noise of which caused the bird to

retreat; otherwise, it was quite at its ease, and picked up the seeds scattered on the floor around the snake. Frogs, both living and dead, placed before it, were left untouched; but another species of snake, non-venomous, namely, the black snake, instantly seized them. At last a common rat was put into the rattlesnake's cage, and then indeed was the reptile aroused. The rat, terror-stricken, fled to the opposite side of the cage in the hope of escaping; but the snake followed his victim with steady deliberation. Strenuous were the efforts of the rat to avoid its persevering pursuer, but all in vain; and at length the snake, seizing a favourable opportunity, struck its prey, and then remained motionless, as if awaiting the result. On receiving the wound, the rat ran about as if bewildered, and at the end of a minute became swollen, and died in convulsions. It was then swallowed.

We may here observe that, on more than one occasion, we have ourselves seen birds in the cages of rattlesnakes, without any display of notice, or any attempt at injury on the part of the reptiles, and so far we can confirm the correctness of Mr. Pence's statement; and we agree with him too, that this snake exerts no supernatural means in order to seize his victims. At the same time, we by no means deny the fact that the rattlesnake, and others, do inspire such a panic into their victims in many instances as to deprive them of the power of escape. There is in South Africa a snake called the boom-slange, which habitually haunts trees and preys upon birds, and which, according to Dr. A. Smith, exerts a sort of fascination over them. "The presence," he says, "of a boom-slange in a tree is generally soon discovered by the birds of the neighbourhood, who collect around it, and fly to and fro, uttering the most piercing cries, until some one, more terror-struck than the rest, actually scans its lips, and almost without resistance becomes a meal for its enemy. During such a proceeding, the snake is generally observed with its head raised about ten or twelve inches above the branch round which its body and tail are entwined, with its mouth open and its neck inflated, as if anxiously endeavouring to increase the terror, which, as would almost appear, it was aware would sooner or later bring within its grasp some one of the feathered group. Whatever may be said in ridicule of fascination, it is nevertheless true that birds and even quadrupeds are, under certain circumstances, unable to retire from certain of their enemies, and, what is even more extraordinary, to resist the propensity to advance from a situation of actual safety into one of the most imminent danger. This I have often seen exemplified in the case of birds and snakes; and I have heard of instances equally curious, in which antelopes and other quadrupeds have been so bewildered by the sudden appearance of crocodiles, and by the grimaces and contortions they practised, as to be unable to fly or even move from the spot towards which the reptiles were approaching to seize them."

The poison of the rattlesnake is more influential on some animals than on others; and Kalm states that oxen and horses perish from its effects sooner than dogs or men. In dogs, however, the poison

does not act in every case with the same rapidity; much, no doubt, depending upon the part which is bitten. Captain Hall exposed some of these animals to the bite of a rattlesnake measuring four feet in length. The first struck with its deadly fangs expired in fifteen minutes; the second lingered in great agony for two hours, before death ended its sufferings; and the third only began to feel the effects of the poison after an interval of three hours. Four days afterwards the same snake bit a dog, which died in thirty seconds, and another dog, which died in four minutes.

The Indians employ various roots as antidotes to the bite of the rattlesnake, but it is doubtful whether they possess any real power. Catesby indeed says that, having travelled much with Indians, among whom he had frequent opportunities of seeing the sad consequence of the bite of these snakes, "it always seemed apparent that the good effects usually attributed by the Indians to these remedies are owing more to the force of nature, or to the smallness of the snake, and its bite, moreover, being in a muscular part. The person thus bit I have known to survive for many hours without assistance. But where a rattlesnake with full force penetrates with his deadly fangs and pricks a vein or artery, inevitable death ensues, and that, as I have often seen, in less than two minutes."

The rattlesnake often attains to large dimensions; the largest seen by Catesby was about eight feet in length, and weighed nearly nine pounds.

With respect to the rattle of this snake, we may describe it as consisting of a number of thin horny cells, of a pyramidal figure, with a protuberant or cup-like marginal ring, fitted into one another as far as this ring; so that this appendage, viewed externally, appears to consist of a series of broad convex rings in juxtaposition. The internal articulation of these distinct portions being very loose, they rustle against each other when smartly vibrated, and produce a whirring noise. The number of the pieces composing the rattle increases, at least to a certain period, with each moult of slough, the basal bell being the last formed; the terminal portion or horny tip of this appendage is simple.

But in the following paper we will pass on to another cage, leaving the rattlesnakes to recover their composure.

## A SUMMER RAMBLE THROUGH BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.

FIRST PAPER.

I AM not what is usually termed a literary man, inasmuch as literature is not my profession; nevertheless I have periodical connexion with the fourth estate. Perhaps this double duty occasioned the following reverie some twelve months ago: "This will never do: work begins to drag; engine wants a safety-valve; wheels want oiling; I must be off somewhere, or there's a doctor's bill and disablement in reserve." Then, as if it was but yesterday that I had read it, came to mind a passage from an eminent writer I had read many years since, in one of the dismal swamps of South America, when

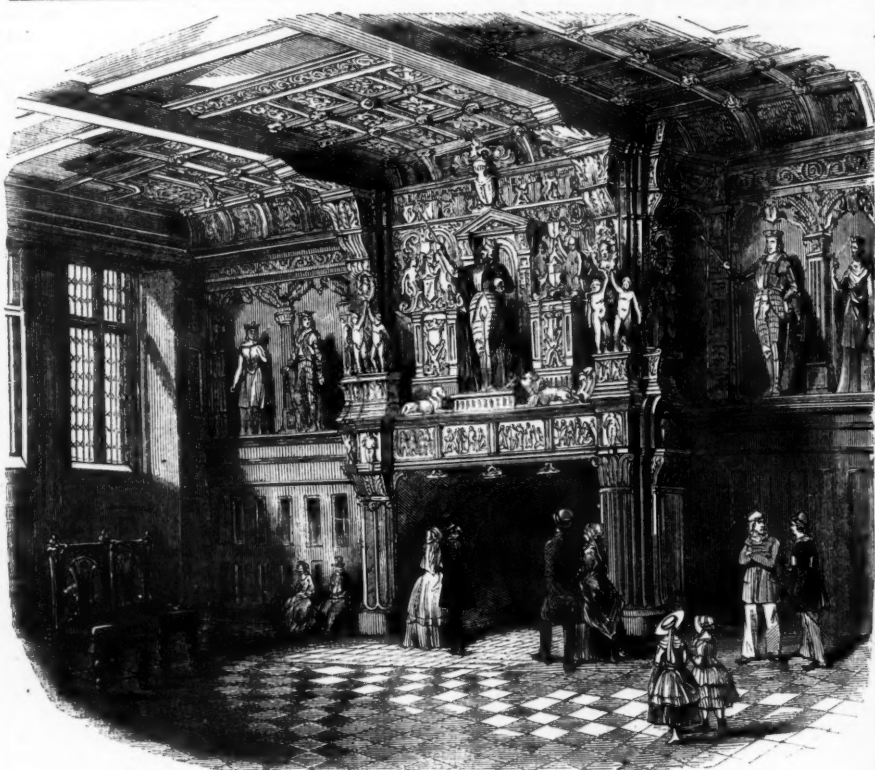
sighing for old England: "The work I am not afraid of, if I can but get my proper exercise; it is this entire relaxation at intervals, such as my foreign tours have afforded, that gives me so keen an appetite for my work at other times, and has enabled me to go through it, not only with no fatigue, but with a sense of absolute pleasure."

This was decisive; the screws should be tightened, and I would go somewhere. A return ticket to Sydney or New York would have suited my locomotive propensities, but domestic peculiarities forbade such a range. Paris I hoped, to see this year, and would not antedate that pleasure. I had previously been up the Rhine, and through some part of Germany; and at last, after much study, I resolved to visit Holland. True, there are no Alps in Holland (*i. e.* Hollow-land); perhaps the fast tourist might vote it a "slow" place; but I remembered that of old the "Low Countries" were the home of civilisation and of liberty, and that, when our third William ascended the abdicated throne of James, certainly not of blessed memory, he uttered no vain boast when he said, "I will make England the *Amsterdam* of all religions;" besides which, I had read that the philanthropic institutions of Holland were without a parallel, and that, with a population of two millions and a half, the adult and juvenile pauper part of that population were provided for without the coercion of poor rates, and that the idea of Dr. Chalmers' civic economy of great towns was realised in a flourishing kingdom; and, in addition to all this, there were pictures of Teniers, Potter, and Rembrandt, that alone were worth the pilgrimage. So to Holland I resolved to go.

But why not go by way of Belgium, and so pass through an intensely papal into an intensely protestant country? There were cathedrals and paintings in Belgium; Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp, had their respective attractions; and, except in small engravings, what did we English know of the masterpieces of the brothers Oost, Van Eyck, Hemling, Van der Velde, and Rubens?

Thus things combined to look pleasant in the distance, and, putting myself *en route*, I found, at this time last year, that we (*i. e.* the writer and three friends) were doing considerable justice to a very nice breakfast at the Ship Hotel, Ostend. I do not advise travellers to be guided always by Murray, most valuable as his handbooks are. There is no compulsory detention here, as he suggests, and the custom-house officers are civil; your passport is very soon returned to you, and a few hours are not misspent in the Brighton of Belgium.

The town has a considerable appearance of activity; and a walk beyond the ramparts is well repaid by a fine view of the extensive sands, admirably adapted for bathing purposes, dotted with hundreds of machines to facilitate the process; and by the *dunes* or sandhills, here seen for the first time, that stretch all along this coast, constituting a great natural embankment by which the inundation of the country is effectually prevented. These remarkable hills of sand, that have been blown up from the sea-shore, stretch along the northern coast of Holland and Belgium, and are sometimes a mile or even two miles in width, and forty or fifty feet high. By patient perseverance these *dunes* are



INTERIOR OF THE TOWN HALL, AT BRUGES.

in many places cultivated, bearing first a coarse reed grass that luxuriates in the silver sand; this, decaying, forms a mould, in which at first potatoes are grown, and in the course of a few years small plantations of firs may be seen on the once barren *dune*.

By one of the many trains that run daily, and to all but one of which third class carriages are attached—a piece of civilisation, by the way, our English railway companies have never yet dreamt of—we reached Bruges in half an hour. This decayed, deserted old city of palaces was once the Liverpool of the Low Countries, and now, in its decadence and melancholy forlornness, contains much material for pencil, note-book, and memory. What strange yet imposing-looking houses are these, with their quaint gables turned to the street, running off into nothing, by a series of steps on each side, and yet how silent and deserted the place looks!

“The season of her splendour has gone by,  
Yet everywhere its monuments remain.”

This painfully quiet place was once the chief city of the Hanseatic League; the then rising English wool trade found here its chief mart; Venice and Lombardy brought here the gorgeous productions of the east in exchange for the timbers, and hides, and tallows of the north; and now all that remains is a deserted city of palaces.

Pushing aside the beggars and *touters*, for which

Bruges is notorious—fellows dogging every step with, “*Vous avez want a commissionaire, sare ?*” or begging money, are great trials to peace principles—let us go first to the cathedral. Its exterior of brick is anything but imposing: it has a heavy, squat, and clumsy look, but within it is elegantly ornate and graceful. This is the first we have seen of those fourteenth century Gothic edifices which render that period so memorable, and which constitute so large a part of the beauty of the continental cities. There is a fine picture in the cathedral, by Van Hemling—an artist scarcely known even by name in England, painted in 1430, and presented by him to this church—representing the Martyrdom of Hyppolytus, who was, according to ecclesiastical tradition, torn to pieces by horses. Of course it is marked by much stiffness and want of correct perspective—these early masters had to find out what we have since learnt from books—they laboured, and we have reaped the benefit of their labours; but the picture is very wonderful. Go close, and look at that distorted and agonised body; at the arms, which seem as if they must start from their sockets with another move of the horses; at the cold-blooded malignity of the executioners, and the resigned, benignant face of the martyr; and you will not be surprised that the Bruges people plume themselves on account of this old treasure.



There are two other pictures well worth looking at in the cathedral; they are both by the brothers Van Oost, and painted in 1636. One is "Christ on the Cross," which is a noble composition; but the other, "The Flight into Egypt," impressed me the most. I am no connoisseur, only a lover of the fine arts; but the haste and bustle thrown into this picture—Mary directing her exclusive attention to the young child; the angel giving his instructions to Joseph, who looks surprised and alarmed at the sudden turn of events; the finger of the angel on Joseph's lips, which says, "Be silent, go to Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word"—these ideas embodied on the canvass have an impressive influence on the mind.

The church of Notre Dame, called here, in Flemish, "Onze Orouw," contains nothing remarkable; so let us pass on to the Hospital of St. John, where we know a treat awaits us. A small fee admits you to the chapter-house; and here are two or three treasures of art worth an earnest notice. The walls are hung with portraits of the principal directors of the establishment. Very quiet and demure do those old heads of houses look now; but what passions have they not felt, and what dark deeds have they not counselled, in the days gone by never to return! At the end of the room is a famous picture by Van Hemling, painted in 1479: it is said to be this artist's masterpiece.

Another picture, or rather series of *tableaux* making one picture, by the same old master, is here. It represents the legend of the martyrdom of St. Ursula and her 11,000 virgins, some of whose bones, we dare say, our readers have had shown them at Cologne. There are six paintings, quite small, let into a kind of cabinet, before which you take your seat, and move it round to bring each scene before the eye. It is really a marvel of beauty. Although painted in oil and on wood, every figure is executed with the finish of a fine miniature, and there is a richness of colour as well as minuteness of detail that is very surprising. Hemling's picture is valued at a million of francs; that is to say, the authorities of the place would not sell it at any price. Four hundred years have passed away since Hemling put the last stroke of his brush on these marvellous pictures, and, up to this time, they have never needed nor received any cleaning; and though I have heard that some of Turner's pictures are already beginning to fade, the works of these artists remain bright and vivid as at the first. Is it because they made and mixed all their own colours?

The Hôtel de Ville of Bruges is small, and though once every niche was occupied by statues of the Flemish counts, these were all destroyed by the mad insurrectionists of the Reign of Terror, who would not suffer these stone tyrants to remain longer in their elevation. The chimes from the tower of Les Halles are pretty, and, to an English ear, novel, though nothing to be compared with the shower of sprinkling music that comes dropping down from the airy tower of Antwerp cathedral, every few minutes, day and night.

Let us leave Bruges: it has had its day, and is now a memory of the past; but no tourist ought

to pass through it without giving it at least a day. The train carries you to Ghent in an hour; and here we must spend a day. Ghent, Gand, or Gent, is a matter of indifference to us, but not so the fact, unnoticed by every guide-book I have seen, that this town was honoured to give birth and name to that Edward's son, who was one of Wycliffe's friends,

"Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster."

We have much to see here, and must economise both time and money. Perhaps the reader will pardon a hint on this last subject. Spending money at hotels is a very painful process. Phlebotomy is nothing to it. The only thing I can compare it to is being driven helplessly on a lee-shore. I will tell you my plan. When we arrived at Ghent, we persisted in carrying our own luggage, notwithstanding the most polite offers to be relieved by gentlemen of the trot, and made our way indiscriminately, anywhere, until fortune and fate should direct us to a tolerable-looking *café, restaurant, or estaminet*. Happily for man and his wants, the *estaminet* is an institution in Belgium, and no one need go far in search of one. We strolled into one, had a glass of Bavarian beer, honestly recommendable as containing an infinitesimal amount of alcohol and a most appreciable amount of refreshment, asked permission to leave our luggage, which was cheerfully granted; and thus, relieved of our *impedimenta*, we sallied forth. Surely this was greatly better than going to an hotel and being treated as "*milor Anglais*," and having a pretty little *billet-doux* afterwards to remind you that dignity, like other things, must be paid for.

Most persons, I suppose, at Ghent would do as I did; namely, after going to the old gateway where Lancaster was born, proceed to the cathedral.

This cathedral was begun so early as the 10th century, but was not finished until the 13th. Gothic, of course, its internal decorations, though very splendid, are Grecian, and thus destroy to a great extent the unity such buildings so impressively sustain. Nevertheless, the black, white, and variegated marble columns that line the transept and the choir are very fine. In front of the high altar are four brass candlesticks about nine feet high, of memorable history. They formerly belonged to Charles I. and adorned his royal chapel at Whitehall; Cromwell sold them to some Flemish merchants, who presented them to the church at St. Bavon. The arms of England are richly emblazoned on them, which the guide pointed out with evident satisfaction.

And now for some pictures, and afterwards a climb to the top of the cathedral. I shall only speak of one or two of the most notable pictures preserved, and that with great care, in this cathedral. There are twenty-four chapels here, the walls of each of which are hung with prodigal profusion of pictures. In the 10th chapel is a wonder of the early Flemish school, celebrated all over Europe, painted by the brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck in 1432. It is impossible to give a correct idea of this work of genius; and I shall content myself with a few historical particulars gathered from Duchesne and Reveil's Museum of

Painting and Sculpture. The picture is divided into three parts, each covered with folding shutters and painted on both sides. To the brothers named, the discovery of painting in oil is attributed; and if this be correct, they have shown in the infancy of the art the high purposes to which it may be applied. The pictures themselves have had a strange history. Towards the close of the last century, four of the paintings were taken to Paris, and were only restored at the peace of 1815; no sooner were they restored, than a trustee of the church of St. Bavon imagined that a good round sum of money was better than painted shutters, and sold six shutters, that is, six paintings, for 240*l.*! From the Brussels collector who bought them they were purchased by Mr. Solly, an English amateur, for 4000*l.*, and by him they were sold some years after to the king of Prussia for 16,000*l.*! They are now in the museum of Berlin. The remainder are in the cathedral at Ghent.

Our admiration of these subjects, however, must be limited to their pictorial skill. They deal with scriptural subjects in a manner offensive to correct protestant taste, and singularly illustrative of Romish superstition. Nothing is more striking to us protestants than the amazing wealth of these continental churches in paintings. Some have been given by private individuals, some by the artists themselves; but the greater part have been purchased by the churches out of the ample funds always at their disposal.

Not to weary my reader with anything more about pictures, although there are several others worth seeing, from this inspection of the inside we determined to ascend the tower, and have a panoramic view of the country from the top. I have sometimes fancied that Prout's, and Roberts', and Turner's pictures were exaggerations of continental scenery; but I am convinced of my mistake. The excessive purity of the air, the bright colouring of the windows and the doors, the jaunty gable ends of all shapes, standing out in such clear outline, and the utter absence of all smoke, make a *coup d'œil* that cannot be obtained in England. Our hot walk up the circular tower was well repaid with the glorious views of Ghent and the country around: and no one should leave Ghent without going up to the top of the church of St. Bavon.

Having descended, we visited the Beguinage. This is one of the largest charitable institutions in Belgium. It has escaped the accidents and reverses that, in this "bank and shoal of time," even in Roman Catholic countries, have overtaken these establishments. Joseph of Austria, that radical church reformer, when he ravaged Belgium, spared it; and, more marvellous still, it was spared by the democratic tyrants of the French revolution. The Beguins are so called from their head-dress, (*beguin* in French meaning a linen cap); it is not, I confess, very beautiful; but it is rather striking, and I saw some very pretty faces under this novel *couronne*, and most heartily wished they could become *wives* and *mothers*, instead of sisters of mercy.

Ghent is fast becoming the Manchester of Belgium. There are several cotton mills in the city, employing from twelve to fourteen hundred hands;

and at noon, when they turn out for dinner, the *sabots*, or wooden shoes, on the paved roads, and the crowd of operatives all wending their way homeward, remind one forcibly of the same scene at Manchester, Stockton, and other cotton manufacturing towns.

#### TETE-A-TETE WITH THE MAIL.

It was in March, in the year 1825—now about thirty years ago—that an imperative necessity demanded my presence in Paris. The urgency of the case was such that the loss of even a single minute that could be saved was not to be thought of. Upon the receipt of the mandate calling me away, I immediately set about procuring my passport, and, furnished with that, mounted the first coach to Dover, where I arrived late in the afternoon. It was near the time of the vernal equinox, and the wind, which had been blowing hard all day, swelled into a gale towards night. The hoarse reverberations of the heavy billows which broke upon the pebbled beach re-echoed through the streets as we entered the town, and gave me but a gloomy anticipation of the kind of passage I might expect across the channel. The "Margaret," the little steamer which then plied between Dover and Calais, had been seven hours that day in making the transit against a furious north wind, and had not brought over a single passenger; no one not compelled to make the experiment being found willing to face the certain discomforts and probable perils of such a voyage.

While taking a welcome refectation after the chill of my outside journey, I asked the landlord of the inn at what time the steamer would sail in the morning.

"If she sails at all," said he, "she will start between ten and eleven; but if this wind continues, the likeliest thing is that she will not leave the harbour; in which case you will have to wait till the gale is abated."

"I can do nothing of the kind," I replied. "You do not mean to tell me that the morning's mail will wait for a change of weather?"

"If the steamer doesn't go, it is likely that Jumper will take the mail; but *he* can't take passengers," and the landlord uttered a short chuckling laugh.

"And who is Jumper? can I see the man?"

"He is not far off, I dare say, and you can see him if you like. Boots shall look him up if you choose, and bring him to you."

I did choose, and Boots "looked him up" and brought him to me.

Jumper was a wiry adult, of an uncertain age, somewhere between forty and fifty-five, carrying a countenance not very explanatory with regard either to that fact or to any other of his history, and which seemed to tell a tale of pickling in the salt brine—a process which, whether it might have lasted twenty or forty years, you could not guess. What hair he had, and he hadn't much, was of the colour of dried sea-weed, sandy and limp, even to his eye-lashes, and so thin as to countenance the notion that the chief part of the crop had, like the short grass of the *dunes* on the opposite coast, been blown up by the roots. He was a man

apparently little given to talk, which was an accomplishment he very seldom practised. In reply to my questions, however, he informed me that if the wind did not moderate during the night he should most likely take over the mail-bags in the morning, but that he had no accommodation for passengers—could not take any, in fact—and should not be able to oblige me. It was in vain that I endeavoured to overcome his scruples and objections by the offer of a liberal reward. He stuck to his word; and, as the landlord (who plainly regarded my request as unreasonable) had assured me, it seemed that I should be obliged to wait. He ended with a civil bow, and took his leave.

The idea of waiting a whole day, and perhaps two or three, under the suspense I then endured, was a torture to which I could not submit. As soon as my meal was ended I went forth to make inquiries, with the hope that some possible chance might turn up. I was walking along the harbour towards the pier, and half stunned with the awful roar on the beach, when I nearly stumbled over Jumper, who suddenly stood at my elbow. He had been on the watch for my coming, and now made his appearance to tell me that he had changed his mind, and that, if I could stand it, and was not given to sea-sickness, and didn't object to his boat when I had seen it, he was ready, upon my own risk, to take me across for the sum I had mentioned. In order that I might know what I had to expect, he would show me the boat to-night, there and then—and I could make up my mind. He was prepared with a lantern, and led the way to a part of the harbour where his boat lay at anchor. I cannot say I was much prepossessed by the sight of it. It was a fat little craft, coble-shaped and tightly decked over, having low bulwarks, over which a child might easily topple into the water. She was rigged and ballasted, he said, for foul weather, and carried very little sail upon a very low mast. She was tight as a buoy or a bottle when the hatches were down, and if she was driven under water, as she very often was, she never shipped anything of consequence, and rose again in an instant. On going below, I found the whole accommodation to consist of a couple of mattresses and coverlets, and as many stuffed sacks, which might serve for bolsters in case sleeping were a possible attempt. There were, besides, some leather straps fastened to the sides of the vessel, by which one might hold on in case of necessity.

At another time I should have rejected with horror the idea of being shut up in a place that might be compared to a potato cellar under the kitchen stairs, and there to be made the sport of a tempest for two or three hours. But no man knows what he can do, or suffer either, until circumstances urge him to the exploit or the endurance. Situated as I was, I could hesitate at no possible means of getting over the channel, and I at once ratified the compact with Jumper by paying a trifle as earnest—only stipulating that he should open the hatchway for an occasional supply of air when opportunity offered.

I breakfasted betimes next morning, and, passing my little luggage through the Custom House, went down to the pier to have a look at the sea. The dark green billows crested with foam thunder-

ed against the old timbers, and sent their spray over the top of the flag-staff. I stood up on the seat, and amused myself by watching the waves. The verse in an old poet, "Tis the tenth wave of human misery," came into my mind. When a great wave came up and wetted my feet, I counted the nine following waves, and, oddly enough, they were invariably less in volume—the tenth again bounding in far above the heads of its predecessors. While thus engaged, I was struck with the aspect of one monster billow, which was a tenth wave, and, not liking its appearance, retreated from the pier while it was yet at some distance. I saved myself a ducking by the act. In a moment after I had retired, the pier was half a yard under water, and the volume that rushed onwards actually floated off heavy timbers that lay about, and drove them against the surrounding buildings.

The "Margaret" showed no signs of getting up her steam; but as ten o'clock struck, Jumper and his boat appeared at the landing-place. He threw my portmanteau down the hole in his deck, and as soon as he had got his precious charge on board, beckoned me to follow. Amid encouraging ejaculations of "What a foolish fellow the man must be!" "More stupid he!" "He'll only repent it once!" and such like valedictory exclamations, uttered spontaneously by the little group that were assembled round the spot, I stepped upon the deck of the small vessel. I lost my footing the same instant; even in the harbour, so rough was the weather, the boat pitched rapidly up and down, and I should have fallen had I not caught hold of a rope. I managed to get my body down the hatchway, and stood with my head level with the deck, when Jumper, spreading his stout sail, stood out to sea. His whole crew consisted of himself and a boy. He had lashed himself to the helm, and the boy, who was hardly thirteen years old, to an iron ring that traversed a stout rope stretched tightly from stem to stern of the little craft. The boy had range enough to reach any part of the deck, and, if he tumbled down, didn't stop to get up again, but scrambled forward to do the master's bidding—now spreading a strip of spritsail—now trimming the mainsail. In clearing the two piers we were met by a billow that literally pitched us on end till the mast lay horizontally; but we righted again in an instant, and plunged onward to meet the next. While in the hollow between the billows, the land, and even the castled cliffs, were shut completely from view, and in the next instant we were mounted aloft, looking down upon the town, where the sailors were yet watching our progress, and hats and hands were waving to cheer us on. On a sudden, Jumper hooted to the boy, who dashed forward, thrust with one hand my head down the hole, and with the other shut down the cover as tightly as if it were that of a snuff-box; the next moment I heard the dash of a cataract of water on the deck, which went swirling off through the scuppers with a sound more suggestive than pleasant.

I was in complete darkness, rolling and bumping about among the leather bags and mattresses, amidst an indescribable noise, as though all the monsters of the deep were flapping with their ponderous tails against our frail planks, determined to be let in. Recollecting the leather

straps, I began groping about the sides of the vessel to lay hold of one; but a tremendous shock, which appeared to my imagination to roll us completely over, threw me forward on my face. As it happened, I fell upon something soft, which returned the unceremonious appeal with a groan. "So," thought I, "I am not the only passenger after all, notwithstanding friend Jumper has no accommodations. The mail is not all the cargo, at any rate, for here is a female besides." "Are you the only passenger," I asked, "besides myself?"

"Yes, sir," said the groaning voice; "you had better lie down, sir, or you will hurt yourself: it's very rough to-day."

I declined to follow the advice, having by this time found a strap to hold on by. "And what induces you, my good woman," I said, "to travel on such a day as this? Surely, no man alive would impose such a journey on a woman."

"No, sir," the voice responded slowly, "no man alive, but one dead." There was another groan, and a stifled sob. "My son, sir, is dead at Calais—the third the sea has taken from me; he was washed ashore yesterday, and I must see him and lay him in the ground."

Here was a lesson for me. How different was the mission of this poor woman from my own, and how different the motives which had urged us both to dare the same peril! I looked forward to the recovery of a right of which I had been wrongfully deprived, and to the satisfaction, perhaps, of triumphing over the wrong-doer. *Her* prospect was bounded by the grave of her perished son, and a future of sorrow for his loss! I am afraid I proved but a poor consoler in her hours of grief; but I spoke to her kindly, and had the happiness of hearing, from her replies, that she knew best where to seek consolation and resignation, and had not sought in vain.

Meanwhile, the place grew stiflingly hot, for want of air, and a giddiness seized me which threatened the loss of consciousness. I tried to open the hatch, and, not being able to do that, thumped at it pretty loudly. It was opened by the boy, and I put forth my head. We were in mid channel, ploughing our way at a fearful rate through a sea all foam—foam in bubbling, boiling, troubled masses—foam in sheets, mantling, black, inky billows, visible through it only in long stripes and blots—foam in ribbons of flying scud, torn into shreds by the wind—and foam in long tangled cables white as snow, now in snaky threads twice the length of our mast, now knotted into confused coils, and now blown into flakes minute as the rain-drops of a shower. The wind howled like a wounded beast, and the water, lashed into a mad fever, sent up a response of mingled roar and hiss, terrible to hear. On we went through the seething caldron, with diminished sail stretched by the gale to the tension of a blown bladder. In this, the very focus of storm and tempest, the waves which, under a less furious impetus, had mounted to a fearful height, were blown and broken into fragments; and though the little bark trembled and shivered in an ominous way—like a living thing in the agony of the death-pang—it pursued a more even course than it had done at the beginning of the voyage.

As we approached the French coast, however, we were borne again upon the lofty billows, and from each one that met us we received a cataract of brine that laid the deck far under water. Jumper bade me dive again into the hold; but I had had enough of that, and refused to submit to it any more. Finding me quite incorrigible, and fearing, I suppose, that the mail bags would get wet, he drew his knife from his pocket, and, cutting a slit in a tarpaulin, sent the boy to slip it over my head. This plan answered very well, and, turning my back to the advancing billows, I bore their buffets without complaining. Jumper and his boy afforded me, while in this position, a characteristic study. Both of them were as thoroughly sodden as if they had been dragged the whole distance in the water; but neither of them seemed to consider that, or the fearful storm that was raging, as anything out of the usual course of affairs. The boy did not, it is my belief, speak a single syllable during the whole voyage. Now and then I saw his lips assume a whistling attitude; but there was too much music of another sort in the atmosphere for a note of his to catch my ear, and I cannot report his favourite tune. The man never spoke but to give his orders, and then he hooted rather than talked, and that in a key which secured attention and intelligibility by its discordance.

Turning my head involuntarily, after a minute investigation of this curious pair, I was gratified by the sight of the white towers and buildings of Calais at about two miles distance. In a few minutes more we were running into harbour by the side of the long pier. Loud hurrahs from a score or two of sailors welcomed our arrival. The well-known boat had been despatched an hour before making her way through the storm, and Jumper being, from his audacity, a bit of a favourite with the mariners of Calais, a small party had assembled to receive him with the customary honours. We had made the passage within the two hours, which, at that period, was reckoned a remarkable feat. From the poor woman who had crossed over to bury her dead son Jumper would take nothing; he was well enough paid, however, by the price for which I had stipulated; and, for my part, I had ever afterwards reason to congratulate myself on the bargain.

#### RECOLLECTIONS OF CRONSTADT.

MANY places are well known to us by name, in the time of our school-books and lessons in geography, which are afterwards forgotten by the great majority, unless some unforeseen occurrence brings them again into notice. Among these is Cronstadt, which has lately become familiar to us all, after being overlooked except by the small circle whose personal interests were connected with it. Every one now knows that it is an island in the gulf of Finland, about twenty miles below the mouth of the Neva, and that it is the strongly fortified Portsmouth of Russia. In approaching it by sea, the whole length of the island is skirted by the vessel before reaching the town, which stands at its upper extremity. In doing so, we pass between the forts Alexander,



Constantine, Peter the Great, Risbank and Cronstot, guarding on each side the channel by which alone vessels of considerable size can reach the port. When such vessels come opposite the harbour, the steam is let off or the sails are furled, and a delay of two or three hours occurs, while custom-house officers come on board to make their inquiries and examinations. Should there be passengers, they and their luggage are transferred into a small steamer, in which they are to proceed to St. Petersburg. During this time many objects of interest attract attention; among these are the gilded dome and spire of the cathedral, glancing brilliantly in the sunshine, the handsome appearance of the public buildings which face the water's edge, the bright and varied colours of the houses, the gangs of convicts who may be seen passing to or from their work, the forests of masts which crowd the harbours, and the various sea-craft around, with their strange-looking crews. Here is a small boat of a light green colour, rowed by a set of dark, dirty-looking men, whose faces vie in greasiness with their sheep-skin coats; there is the trim cutter of a naval officer, manned by eight men, still dark, but clean in themselves, and neatly dressed in scarlet and blue shirts edged with white; not far off are some Finnish vessels, laden with wood for the capital, and managed by a few men who have nothing on their heads but the flaxen hair of the north, and dressed in a peculiar fashion. Around are merchant ships from Sweden, Denmark, Holland, France, America, and elsewhere, and near by are some fine men-of-war, one of which serves as a guard-ship, whose officers have already visited your vessel to inquire into its history and object. There is ample time to observe all this, as the difficulty of arranging passports prevents most travellers from landing at Cronstadt, and few see more of it than I have now described. Circumstances having led me, however, to spend some time within its walls, I had an opportunity of becoming well acquainted with the town and its inhabitants.

The day after I reached St. Petersburg, whither I went for the purpose of passing the principal custom-house with less annoyance than the subordinate one at Cronstadt, I returned to the latter place by one of the small steamers which ply, during summer, between it and the capital, or other places on the gulf of Finland. These are all British (the greater number being Scotch built), and were at first managed entirely by English and Scotch engineers, under whom the Russians gained the experience they required to act as enginemen. The landing-place from St. Petersburg is on the east side of the island, at a wooden pier which stretches a considerable distance into the water. No delay occurs in landing upon it; but on reaching the island itself, you are reminded of the military system of the country. A fortified wall or rampart presents itself, and you must pass through a gate guarded by soldiers, some of whom search the droschky and your boxes, lest you should have anything unmarked as having paid duty at the custom-house; while another demands your passport, which he carries to an officer to be examined.

Being now within the walls of the town, you

are at liberty to explore it unchallenged, and may make yourself acquainted with all its details, or even range over the whole island, only submitting to a search every time you drive through any of the gates of the town, should the guards be disposed to take the trouble this gives them. It was somewhat entertaining to be occasionally detained for this purpose, by two or three fully-armed soldiers, who went through their task with an air of much gravity and importance, while you were guiltless of having anything with you but comfortable wrappings for the feet, or of any other intention but of driving along an open road for a couple of miles and then returning.

The island on which Cronstadt stands is perfectly flat and low, being raised only a few feet above the surface of the water. Granite boulders are found on it, as everywhere in the neighbourhood; but the bed on which they rest is alluvial, and seems both by its formation and figure to be a Delta of the Neva, an outpost of numerous islands of the same nature in and near St. Petersburg, where the noble river enters the gulf by many mouths. The small elevation of the island exposes it to the danger of being flooded; and, having been once covered by many feet of water, the remembrance of such a disaster leads to much anxiety whenever a west wind prevails, driving up the waters of the sea upon it. When the water reaches a certain height, warning is given to all concerned, by the startling boom of a single cannon, which is repeated at each foot that the water rises. Shortly after I reached Cronstadt, while witnessing for the first time the brilliancy of an evening party in Russia, I heard this solemn sound four times in the space of an hour or two. Little notice was taken of it by the gay throng around; but preparations were made in the most exposed parts of the town for removing people and goods. Nothing serious occurred, however, as the wind soon changed, and the waters fell as quickly as they had risen.

The eastern end of the island, where the town stands, is the broadest, but does not exceed a verst, or three quarters of a mile. It becomes gradually narrower to the other extremity, stretching to the length of three miles above the water, and another mile below the surface. Its shores, as well as those of the mainland, are very shelving, so that there is only a narrow passage of water deep enough for large vessels to ascend as high as Cronstadt. At the extreme west point is a lighthouse, used in spring and autumn only, as in summer the length of the days makes its employment superfluous; while it is equally unnecessary in winter, when the frozen sea prevents any shipping from approaching it. The lighting of this lighthouse in spring is sometimes the first gladdening intimation to the inhabitants of Cronstadt that the ice is so much broken up as to admit of vessels approaching their ice-bound shores, as some shipping must then be within sight of the lighthouse, though not yet seen by them. Should any one start from the Pharos to visit the town, he must pass through a considerable distance of shallow water, and across much soft marshy ground, before he can gain what is firm and dry. On this low ground are some birches and a little brushwood, and it will repay a visit in summer to

those who love the beautiful grass of Parnassus, or who will greet the heather bell as a familiar acquaintance.

In advancing along the island, objects of another kind claim attention. Passing over the houses, scattered or collected into what is called the colony—the Russian, German and English burying-grounds; the slaughter-houses, wisely placed at a distance from the town; and the gardens, cultivated by invalided sailors, meet the eye. The fortifications then present themselves. The first of these is Fort Catharine, a large square mound of earth, calculated for cannon on three sides. Advancing across the plain, used as an exercising ground, you pass several short ramparts placed behind one another, before you reach the proper defences of the town. Some, if not all of these, were erected in the time of Peter the Great, for protection against expected attacks from the Swedes, and would serve the same purpose now against an enemy approaching the town by land. It is finally defended by a double moat and a high wall of curious masonry, which stretch entirely across the island. At several places barracks are built behind this wall, on which cannon are thickly planted, and which extend round the northern and western sides of the town. The St. Petersburg gate, already spoken of, and two others on the west side, by which there is access to the open country, are the only points of egress on three sides. On the fourth or southern side, and facing the only available channel in the gulf, are the harbours, protected by Fort Menshikoff, lately completed, with moles or piers bristling with guns. The former is built of massive blocks of granite, the latter are chiefly composed of an open frame-work of fir-trees, filled up with loose stones and covered by a wooden casing. The first harbour, in approaching from the Baltic, is for merchant vessels. At its extremity is a large area for collecting wood for exportation, and at its side the custom-house offices with a market in the fashion of an eastern bazaar for all that is required by vessels and their crews, (and consequently only used in summer when the port is open): beyond this are, first, a small, then a large harbour for vessels of war.

From the harbours, a canal runs into the town, inclosing an extensive square space, within which we find a large open ground for exercising troops, with a bronze statue of Peter the Great in the centre; the arsenal stands at one end, and facing its side is the winter house of the governor of Cronstadt, the admiralty buildings, and the cadet corps or institution for training young naval officers, which is distinguished by having on its highest roof a telegraph, the arms of which are often seen in motion, giving intelligence that is carried on by others on the mainland to St. Petersburg.

Behind these edifices, but still within the space inclosed by the canal, are some churches and streets of wooden houses, large public gardens, within which stands the governor's summer residence (formerly the palace of Peter the Great), the government yard, where are the docks, wet and dry, and stores for repairing and building vessels, and the manège, a house where the soldiers and sailors are drilled in winter. Here the late emperor

reviewed portions of his troops when he visited Cronstadt, which he did from time to time, but at uncertain intervals, and sometimes unexpectedly. It often happened that many days were fixed for his coming, without his doing so; the men who were to be examined were constantly kept in readiness and their officers in anxiety, until some day, when no especial announcement had been made, the czar was known to be in the town. This uncertainty was the cause of his being often there without my having an opportunity of seeing him; but as the time of my departure approached, I determined to be on the watch for one sight of a man so renowned for his personal appearance and his extensive power.

Having requested my friends to inform me when they knew of his arrival, I was told early one morning of his having come the previous evening, and that I might see him by being at the door of the manège about twelve o'clock, when he would leave it to visit other establishments. I accordingly went at the fixed time, and placed myself among those who had collected for the same purpose. Their number was not great—perhaps 100 or 200—and consisted chiefly of the class of shopkeepers. A number of sledges belonging to the emperor and his suite stood round the door, none being so distinguished from the others that I could fix on it as being that of Nicholas. After a little delay an officer appeared, and called forward one which I now closely observed, from the richness of its fur covering, the beauty and size of the black horse in it, and from the unusual circumstance that the animal was also covered with a fur-lined cloth while it stood. Nothing else marked the imperial sledge, except the very large beard of the driver. Even this trifle deserved notice; for when Peter the Great deprived all his nobles of their beards by a ukase commanding them to be shaved, no such command was laid on the peasantry; and the fine beard of a coachman is as much a point of consideration in Russia, as the height of a man-servant in England. When the sledge was drawn up near the door of the building, a small, slight, delicate-looking young man came out to see that everything was in order. Finding it so, he re-entered the porch, and immediately returned, following the emperor, whose majestic figure, noble bearing, and fine countenance, fully justified all I had heard of him. He looked, however, much out of health, from his sallow complexion, which was that of an old man, the vigour of whose life was exhausted. On his appearance, all uncovered their heads, and some made an obeisance, but not a very low one. No word or sound, however, was heard. Nicholas, in acknowledgment, saluted us in the military fashion, raising two fingers to the right side of the helmet, but he neither smiled nor raised his eyes from the ground. The very different reception our own queen receives, and the gracious looks and bows she returns, as if on each side "hearts were of each other sure," rose to my mind in strong contrast to what I then saw.

The young man who accompanied the czar was the grand duke Constantine, whose puny figure seemed little able to bear the fatigue imposed upon him by the onerous offices he held, and whose duties he was not allowed to discharge by proxy.

The father and son drove off together, and went straight to the soldiers' hospital. One of the wards had been prepared for their inspection, and was in good order; but the emperor, choosing to deviate from the plan laid out for him, entered the hospital by a different entrance from that intended, passed through a department not got up for his reception, and finding no classification of patients, and detecting other irregularities, instantly handed over the head doctor to an officer to be put under arrest for ten days, at the expiration of which time the second doctor was to take his place, and to be succeeded by the third. This was only one of many instances, showing the readiness of the emperor to correct abuses when they came immediately under his notice.

The plan of the town of Cronstadt is simple and regular, the streets crossing each other at right angles. The principal ones are the Cathedral Street and Commandansby, running across the island from north to south, and the Flügel from east to west. The houses in the latter are of brick, and form barracks for the officers of the army and navy. Elsewhere, we find the cathedral, the German or Lutheran, the English, Roman Catholic, and several Russian churches; hospitals for soldiers and for females; an institution for educating the orphan daughters of officers; an open market-place for hay, cattle, fish, &c.; and the Gesteinnoor Door, or great shops. The latter, and the bazaar near the harbour, are built round an oblong court, opening towards the streets, and having an open colonnade all round, which protects them from heat in summer, and enables purchasers to pass conveniently from one to another, without exposure to the weather. It requires much practice to purchase well in these shops, as one must bargain for every article; and a foreigner is sure to pay much more than a native would do. Articles of English manufacture are so generally admitted to be superior to any other, that everything is recommended as being "Angliskiy," even those that gain nothing by being so, such as wool for embroidery. We generally heard what was to be said on this point in silence, trusting to our own judgment of what was shown to us; but on one occasion we rejected the wool thus praised, saying that we wished Berlin, not English wool, and the change was magically effected, for it instantly became genuine Berlin, only recently imported.

Most of the houses in Cronstadt are of wood, but these are in the inferior streets; whilst the extensive government buildings, and some large private houses of plastered brick, give the principal streets a handsome air. They are now provided with flags for foot-passengers, and are in better order in winter for walking or driving than our own, as the porter or drudge (the *dornik*) of each house removes the snow from the foot-path as soon as it falls, under pain of being whipped by order of police if he neglects this duty. The carriage-way is a hard, smooth road, of well-beaten snow, over which the sledges glide with a smoothness very different from the jolting motion of the *droschky* in summer, when the causeway is made rough and irregular by the action of the frost.

To those who first become acquainted with Russia, its climate, atmosphere, people and natu-

ral features, through a residence in Cronstadt, much is new and striking, which would not be so after a residence in St. Petersburg, or any other Russian town. Nothing is more so than the gay colours on which the eye rests at every turn. The plastered houses are white or sand-coloured, with dark red roofs; and the wooden, second-rate buildings are blue, pinky, or grey, with the roof very frequently light green, though sometimes of a quieter colour. The wooden inclosures have the same bright lines; and the colours for dress are, even in winter, as gay as good taste will allow. We are accustomed in England to see sombre colours prevailing in winter, but the reverse is the case in Russia, where rose colour, pink, blue, fawn, or white, are usual for part of the walking dress, while the somewhat deeper shades of the satin and velvet shoube, or pelisse of the higher classes, set off the rich furs on which they pride themselves. As the poorer people delight themselves in crimson, scarlet, and yellow, with gold tinsel in addition for gala days, the taste for bright colouring seems universal, and there may be some truth in the idea that it is fostered by the uniformity of colour which pervades the landscape during the long winter of six or seven months. In Cronstadt there is relief to the eye in the quiet colour of the naval uniform—dark green—covered in winter by a long cloak, of light grey for officers, and brown for privates.

An English eye is struck everywhere abroad by the small proportion of females in the streets in comparison to what we see at home; nowhere is this so marked as in Russia, most of all in garrison towns; and Cronstadt has an additional cause, peculiar to itself, being a *depôt* for such convicts as are not banished to Siberia. These men are constantly met with, passing along the street, in gangs of fifty or a hundred; their dress is motley, brown and grey being used in the same way as blue and yellow, or any other contrast, is for the dress of a clown. The number of years of labour to which each man is condemned is indicated by patches sewed on to the clothes at various places. Some of the convicts are chained to the barrows which they use in working, and many wear heavy chains from the waist to the feet. These impede their progress, and though not much seen, attract attention by clanking as the wearers walk. No sound ever fell more sadly on my ear than this; for I had entered Russia, as many do, with a conviction, not only that there was an arbitrary government, but that each individual was groaning under, and fully sensible of, his degradation. This false idea was corrected by my residence in the country; but while yet vivid, the chain worn by the convicts seemed the embodiment of all that was despotic, unjust, and inhuman.

As I became more accustomed to meet these prisoners, it was interesting to study their countenances. I scrutinized hundreds at various times, and while I could not fail to observe a want of brightness or intelligence, I was also struck by the absence of malignity or determined wickedness in their expression. I saw in none the dark, reckless, hardened, or utterly abandoned look too often found in our densely peopled cities. Besides this, it was evident that their social feelings were not embittered; for when an opportunity occurred

of rendering any service to passers-by, such as removing what might delay or obstruct their progress, it was done with a gratifying readiness, and the interchange of a pleasant look, if not a word of friendly greeting. Distressing as it was to be reminded of crime and its consequences by the sight of these prisoners, a little reflection reminded us that their condition is less sad than that of those shut up in prison, as they enjoy fresh air, the open sky and sunshine, and, at least, the sight of many fellow-creatures, neither their companions in evil, nor acting as their guards.

Many other figures, besides those already mentioned, gave variety to the streets in Cronstadt. Among them were the priest of the Russian church, wearing a long, dark, silk robe, over which was seen a gold chain and large cross; the merchant, dressed in summer as they are elsewhere in Europe, and in winter enveloped in his long fur cloak; the coachman in blue caftans, girt with a red sash; the serf with his neatly shaped but greasy surtout of sheep-skin, the fleece being turned inwards; and the colonist, German or Finnish, daily bringing provisions from the opposite coast. To these we must add in summer, sailors and sea captains of many nations, from the graceful and agile Greek to the squat and clumsy Laplander. A large number of sledges in winter, with droschkijs and carriages in summer, enliven the streets at all hours.

Such was Cronstadt when I visited it, though doubtless many changes have since been wrought there, in consequence of the menacing approaches of our fleet to its shores.

#### THE DEAD SOLDIER OF BOMARSUND.\*

WHEN the fortress of Bomarsund was captured by the French and English in 1854, many prisoners were taken, and not a few of the Russian soldiers were slain. After the battle was over, preparations were made for burying the dead. In the pocket of one of the dead Russians was found a little book, which was secured by a British sailor, and sent home as a curiosity to his father. The man's friends felt anxious to know what the Russian had been reading, and had the tract translated. Its contents gave them great pleasure and profit; and the translation is here printed, in hope that other people may obtain pleasure and profit from it also.

The tract was printed at St. Petersburg, in 1849, under the censorship of Andrea Okoopev, and is as follows:—

##### "THE STRICT SEARCH;

*\* Or, a Traveller and the Custom-house Officers.*

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

"A traveller in his journey crossed the frontier, and had to pass through the custom-house. The officers said to him, 'Have you any contraband goods?' To which he replied, 'I do not think I have.' 'That may be all true,' said the officers, 'but we cannot let you pass without examination. Permit us to search.' 'If you please,' said the traveller, 'but allow me to sit down while you perform your duty.'

"They then began their search, and first examined his portmanteau. Afterwards they turned to his person, and searched his pockets, his pocket-book, his boots, and his neckcloth.

"The examination being over, the traveller addressed the officers, saying, 'Gentlemen, will you allow me to tell you what thoughts this examination has awakened in my mind? We are all travelling to an eternal kingdom, into which we cannot take any contraband goods. If you had found any prohibited articles upon me, you would have taken them from me, and have fined me for it. Now, think how many careless travellers pass into eternity, laden with sins which are forbidden by the heavenly King. By these forbidden things I mean, deceitfulness, anger, pride, lying, covetousness, envy, evil-speaking, and similar offences, which are hateful in the sight of God. For all these every man who passes the boundary of the grave is searched, far more strictly than you have searched me. God is the great Searcher of hearts. From him nothing is hid; and in that kingdom, as in this, every forbidden article subjects a man to punishment. Then the King says to every transgressor, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' This fearful sentence is executed with the most impartial justice; and although the number of transgressors is very great, and their rank and station very different, yet not one can escape, for 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God.'

"The King of heaven, not willing that any of us should perish, sent his only-begotten Son to become our substitute, to make reconciliation for transgressors, and to clothe us with his righteousness, without which we cannot see his kingdom. This Messiah, or *sent-one*, is Jesus Christ our Saviour, who came down to earth on purpose to bear "our sins in his own body on the tree," to save all that believe on him, to wash us from our spiritual pollution, and to clothe us with the spotless robe—the wedding garment—of his righteousness. And "they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," "are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."

"The custom-house officers having heard this, could not find words to express their gratitude to the stranger, but hoped to be permitted to see and hear him again.

"Gentlemen," continued the traveller, "whether we shall meet again on earth is uncertain: God only knows; but as I am about to leave you, I will tell you something more—it is about TWO PLANKS.

"A preacher wishing to explain to his congregation what a dangerous delusion those persons are in who seek salvation partly from their own works, and partly from the righteousness of Christ, said to them: "Supposing it is needful for you to cross a river, over which two planks are thrown. One is perfectly new, the other is completely rotten. How will you go? If you walk upon the rotten one, you are sure to fall into the river. If you put one foot on the rotten plank and the other on the new plank, it will be the same—you will certainly fall through and perish." So there is only one safe method left: *Set both your feet on the new plank.*

"Brethren, the rotten plank is your own unclean self-righteousness. He who trusts in it must perish without remedy. The new plank is the eternal saving righteousness of Christ, which came from heaven, and is given to every one who believeth in Him.

"Trust on this righteousness, or rather should I say, on this everlasting truth, and you shall be saved; for the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

\* May be had separately printed as a tract, at the Religious Tract Society.